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ABSTRACT

The attitudes of white college students toward black students with disabilities were studied to determine whether having a disability would add to or negate negative attitudes white college students would have toward African Americans. Two hundred undergraduate and graduate students in educational psychology classes participated. Four conditions were compared: black, black in a wheelchair, nonrace specific, and nonrace specific in a wheelchair. The Situational Attitude Scale--Race and Disability was created to evaluate attitudes in threatening, intimate, socially conscious, and competitive social situations. The instrument uses a standard statement for each situation, changing the race and disability status within different surveys. It was hypothesized that for threatening, competitive, and socially conscious situations, having a disability would be primary and negate negative or fearful attitudes. It was hypothesized that in the intimate situation, having a disability would be additive and would compound negative attitudes. In the threatening situation, disability was found to be primary and to negate fearful attitudes. Other hypotheses were not confirmed. In the competitive situation, disability did negate the negative feelings participants felt, but the black condition was not significantly higher in any of the hypothesized comparisons. Race had no effect on the attitudes of persons toward the disabled in the intimate social situation. (Contains two tables and eight references.) (SLD)

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Attitudes Of White College Students Toward African Americans with Disabilities in Social Situations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of White college students toward African Americans with disabilities. The primary focus was to determine if having a disability would be additive or negate negative attitudes White college students have toward African Americans. Four social situations were investigated. The Situational Attitude Scale-Race and Disability (SAS-RAD) was created to evaluate attitudes in threatening, intimate, socially conscious, and competitive social situations. Four different conditions were compared; black, black wheelchair, nonrace specific, and nonrace specific wheelchair. The SAS-RAD uses a standard statement for each social situation, changing only the race or disability status within the different surveys. With this format, the differences in the scores can only be attributed to the different race and disability statuses. Four surveys were created using a Latin Square design and randomly distributed to the participants. A survey with only all nonrace specific conditions was also distributed as a validity check.

The hypotheses were very specific for each situation. The hypotheses for the threatening, competitive and social conscious situation was that having a disability would be primary and negate negative or fearful attitudes. The hypotheses in the intimate situation was that disability would be additive and compound negative attitudes. A MANOVA was used to compare the differences in the race/disability statuses and social situations. A Dunn Post-Hoc test was performed to determine significant differences.

In the threatening social situation, disability was found to be primary and negated fearful attitudes. But the hypothesized basic assumptions were flawed. This was also the case in the competitive social situation where disability was found to be primary. The additive for the intimate situation and the negating hypotheses for the socially conscious situation were not confirmed.

Introduction

There has been much research conducted on the attitudes of Whites toward African Americans in social situations. This research shows that Whites have more negative attitudes toward African Americans than they have toward other Whites in social situations (Balenger, & Sedlacek, 1992; Minatoya, & Sedlacek, 1984; Sedlacek, Brooks, & Mindus 1973; White & Sedlacek, 1987). Research has also shown that Whites have negative attitudes toward disabled individuals in certain social situations (Eisenman, 1985; McQuilkin, Freitag & Harris, 1990; Stovall & Sedlacek, 1983).

The negative attitudes held by Whites in some social situations are the same for African Americans and for disabled individuals. White students were found to have negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities in situations that were considered intimate or requiring very close contact. Similar negative attitudes were also found in these types of social situation with African Americans. In addition, Whites also had negative attitudes toward African Americans in other social situation. These other social situations include: African Americans moving into their neighbor, being promoted, and having access to a swimming pool that whites were using (Balenger, Hoffman, & Sedlacek, 1992; Minatoya, & Sedlacek, 1984; Sedlacek, Brooks, & Mindus 1973; White & Sedlacek, 1987). Whites did not have negative attitudes toward the disabled individuals in these social situations.

The purpose of this research will be to investigate whether being African American and disabled has a compounding affect in certain social situations, or will disability negate the negative attitudes held by White college students toward African Americans in certain social

situations.

In each of the social situation the hypothesized attitude of Whites toward African Americans, African Americans with disabilities, nonrace specific individuals, and nonrace specific individuals with a disability will be different. These hypotheses are based on basic assumptions which are described below for each social situation.

(Higher scores show a more negative attitude)

Threatening:

The basic assumptions for this social situation are that Whites have a more negative attitude toward African Americans in threatening situations and having a disability makes an individual less threatening or nonthreatening. Therefore, for this social situation, disability should be the primary variable. Disability should negate the negative attitudes that Whites have toward African American males in socially threatening situations.

Black > Nonrace specific

Black > Black wheelchair

Black > Nonrace specific wheelchair

Black wheelchair < Nonrace specific

Nonrace specific > Nonrace specific wheelchair

(Nonrace specific wheelchair vs. Black wheelchair)?

Intimate:

The basic assumptions for this social situation are that Whites have a negative attitude toward African Americans in intimate social situations and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities in intimate situations. Therefore, for this social situation, disability

should have an additive negative effect (be compounding if there is already a negative attitude). Being disabled and African American should cause a higher score. Having a disability should also cause the nonrace specific condition with a disability to have a higher score.

Black > Nonrace specific

Black < Black wheelchair

Black wheelchair > Nonrace specific

Black wheelchair > Nonrace specific wheelchair

Nonrace specific < Nonrace specific wheelchair

(Black vs. Nonrace specific wheelchair)?

Socially Conscious:

The basic assumptions for this social situation is that Whites are more aware and sympathetic toward disability than race in socially conscious situations and that they are less sympathetic toward Blacks in socially conscious situations. Therefore, for this social situation, disability should be primary. Disability should negate the less sympathetic attitude Whites have toward African Americans in socially conscious situations, and therefore have a more sympathetic attitude toward individuals that are nonrace specific and have a disability.

Black > Nonrace specific

Black < Black wheelchair

Black > Nonrace specific wheelchair

Nonrace specific > Nonrace specific wheelchair

Nonrace specific > Black wheelchair

(Nonrace specific wheelchair vs. Black wheelchair)?

Competitive:

The basic assumptions for this social situation is that Whites have more negative attitudes toward African Americans in competitive situations, because of the perception of affirmative action. Also, Whites are more tolerant toward individuals with a disability in competitive situations. Therefore, in this social situation disability should negate the negative attitudes Whites have toward African Americans. Having a disability should make Whites more tolerant toward nonrace specific individuals in competitive situations.

Black > Nonrace specific

Black > Black wheelchair

Black > Nonrace specific wheelchair

Nonrace specific > Nonrace specific wheelchair

Nonrace specific > Black wheelchair

(Black wheelchair vs. Nonrace specific wheelchair)

Method

Participants:

The individuals that participated in this study were 200 undergraduate and graduate students in Educational Psychology classes from a large Midwestern university. Some of the participants were students who signed up to participate in this study for class credit. The rest of the participants who were given the survey to fill out as a task in class. There were 136 (68%) undergraduate students and 64 (32%) graduate students, 139 (69.5%) females and 61 (30.5%) males that participated in the study. The average age of the

participant was 23.02 years with a standard deviation of 5.89.

Instrument

The instrument that was used to assess the attitudes of White college students toward African Americans with disabilities was the Situational Attitude Scale-Race and Disability (SAS-RAD), a revised version of the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) developed by William Sedlacek and Glenwood Brooks in 1970. The SAS-RAD will have five social situations. Each social situation will be measured by seven bipolar semantic differential scales (e.g., happy-sad, worried-not worried). The bipolar semantic differential scales are measured using a likert scale from A to G, with A equaling an one and G seven (some scales are reversed coded). The five social situations will be:

1. You find out that someone with lower grades and test scores received the scholarship you applied for. (Competitive)
2. You are assigned a new dorm roommate. (Intimate)
3. You read that a grocery store owner was shot during a robbery. (Socially Conscious)
4. You get on an elevator late at night, there's a man standing in the back of this empty elevator. (Threatening)
5. Your mother is visiting, and while you are out she searches your dorm room. (Internal validity check, mother situation)

There were five different surveys given to the participants. Four of the surveys had a Latin Square design. This design allows each participant to respond to one of the conditions in each of the social situations. This design reduced the likelihood of participants figuring out what the researcher was trying to determine. Also, participants were not given surveys that represented one of the disability or race conditions. By using this design, there was also a reduction in the likelihood that the participants would answer questions using politically correct answers.

There also was a social situation that did not have relationship to the research. This

question was used as a validity check for each participant (The mother social situation). If the participant honestly answered the questions, there should be no significant differences between the answers on any of the surveys. The participants are expected to have high scores on this situation. The fifth survey will have all four of the nonrace specific conditions and the internal validity social situation. This survey was used to compare the nonrace specific conditions on each of the four other surveys.

It was used as an external validity check of the nonrace specific conditions on the four different surveys. If the participants honestly answered the questions on the mixed surveys, and were not trying to answer all the questions with the equal amounts of negative or positive attitudes, the results on the nonrace specific questions on the mixed surveys and all nonrace specific survey should have no significant differences in the responses.

SURVEY 1

I. You find out that someone with lower grades and test scores received the scholarship you applied for.

II. You are assigned a new dorm roommate who is black and in a wheelchair.

III. Your mother is visiting, and while you are out she searches your dorm room.

IV. You read that a grocery store owner in a wheelchair was shot during a robbery.

V. You get on an elevator late at night, there's a black man standing in the back of this empty elevator.

SURVEY 2

I. You find out that someone black and in a wheelchair with lower grades and test scores received the scholarship you applied for

II. You are assigned a new dorm roommate.

III. Your mother is visiting, and while you are out she searches your dorm room.

IV. You read that a black grocery store owner was shot during a robbery.

V. You get on an elevator late at night, there's man in a wheelchair sitting in the back of this empty elevator.

SURVEY 3

I. You find out that someone black with lower grades and test scores received the scholarship you applied for.

II. You are assigned a new dorm roommate who is in a wheelchair.

IV. You read that grocery store owner is shot during a robbery.

III. Your mother is visiting, and while you are out she searches your dorm room.

V. You get on an elevator late at night, there's a black man in a wheelchair sitting in the back of this empty elevator.

SURVEY 4

I. You find out that someone in a wheelchair with lower grades and test scores received the scholarship you applied for.

II. You are assigned a new dorm roommate who is black.

III. Your mother is visiting, and while you are out she searches your dorm room.

IV. You read that a black grocery store owner in a wheelchair was shot during a robbery.

V. You get on a elevator late at night. There's a man standing in the back of this empty elevator.

SURVEY 5

I. You find out that someone with lower grades and test scores received the scholarship you applied for

II. You are assigned a new dorm roommate.

III. Your mother is visiting, and while you are out she searches your dorm room.

IV. You read that a grocery owner was shot during a robbery.

V. You get on an elevator late at night, there's a man standing in the back of this empty elevator.

Analysis

A MANOVA was performed on the different social situations to determine if there were differences between how the participants responded to the different disability and race condition. Also basic statistical information such as the mean, standard deviation, etc. were collected. There will be four MANOVAs performed, one for each social situation. Each MANOVA had four levels with the levels being the four different conditions. The seven bipolar semantic scales were the dependent variables. There also was a MANOVA performed on the internal validity check (mother social situation). A MANOVA was performed comparing the nonrace specific/no disability

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conditions survey to the nonrace/ no disability conditions on the four mixed condition surveys. The four validity MANOVAs were performed to determine if the participants answered the four surveys with each of the race/disability conditions present or answered with socially desirable answers or with their true feelings. Dunn Post-Hoc test were performed to determine if the hypothesized differences in the conditions scores were significantly different.

Results

Key: SC= Socially Conscience, C = Competitive, I = Intimate, M = Mother Situation, T = Threatening

MANOVA

Variable	Hypoth. SS	Error SS	Hypoth. MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
SC1	22.43000	717.32500	5.60750	3.67859	1.52436	.197
SC2	25.27000	351.35000	6.31750	1.80179	3.50623	.009
SC3	20.82000	430.77500	5.20500	2.20910	2.35616	.055
SC4	33.33000	298.22500	8.33250	1.52936	5.44836	.000
SC5	8.43000	573.25000	2.10750	2.93974	.71690	.581
SC6	11.43000	350.72500	2.85750	1.79859	1.58874	.179
SC7	24.97000	241.22500	6.24250	1.23705	5.04627	.001

Variable	Hypoth. SS	Error SS	Hypoth. MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
C1	42.37000	365.22500	10.59250	1.87295	5.65552	.000
C2	41.77000	278.02500	10.44250	1.42577	7.32412	.000
C3	50.27000	508.35000	12.56750	2.60692	4.82082	.001
C4	69.47000	285.92500	17.36750	1.46628	11.84458	.000
C5	54.72000	324.47500	13.68000	1.66397	8.22128	.000
C6	54.48000	320.87500	13.62000	1.64551	8.27705	.000
C7	67.47000	421.15000	16.86750	2.15974	7.80995	.000

Variable	Hypoth. SS	Error SS	Hypoth. MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
I1	109.87000	431.15000	27.46750	2.21103	12.42297	.000
I2	45.73000	618.25000	11.43250	3.17051	3.60588	.007
I3	5.50000	349.37500	1.37500	1.79167	.76744	.548
I4	68.98000	265.57500	17.24500	1.36192	12.66224	.000
I5	32.87000	622.32500	8.21750	3.19141	2.57488	.039
I6	14.87000	450.25000	3.71750	2.30897	1.61002	.173
I7	22.93000	506.25000	5.73250	2.59615	2.20807	.070

Variable	Hypoth. SS	Error SS	Hypoth. MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
M1	4.08000	340.40000	1.02000	1.74564	.58431	.674
M2	4.87000	295.12500	1.21750	1.51346	.80445	.524
M3	1.37000	421.02500	.34250	2.15910	.15863	.959
M4	4.07000	239.12500	1.01750	1.22628	.82974	.508
M5	4.42000	244.17500	1.10500	1.25218	.88246	.475
M6	6.13000	379.85000	1.53250	1.94795	.78673	.535
M7	1.72000	252.87500	.43000	1.29679	.33159	.857
Variable	Hypoth. SS	Error SS	Hypoth. MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F

Variable	Hypoth. SS	Error SS	Hypoth. MS	Error MS	F	Sig. of F
T1	302.67000	405.72500	75.66750	2.08064	36.36740	.000
T2	35.32000	164.50000	8.83000	.84359	10.46717	.000
T3	93.13000	398.01875	23.28250	2.04112	11.40672	.000
T4	256.08000	421.87500	64.02000	2.16346	29.59147	.000
T5	172.77000	381.05000	43.19250	1.95410	22.10350	.000
T6	36.28000	348.07500	9.07000	1.78500	5.08123	.001
T7	130.85000	482.02500	32.71250	2.47192	13.23362	.000

Dunn Post-Hoc Test

Significant Differences in Pairwise Comparisons

Key: SC= Socially Conscience, C = Competitive, I = Intimate, M = Mother Situation, T = Threatening, BL = Black, BLW= Black wheelchair, NR = Nonrace specific, NRW = Nonrace specific wheelchair

SC2	SC4	SC7
NR > NRW	NR > NRW	BL > BL
NR > BLW	BL > NRW	
BL > BLW		

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW
NR > BLW	NR > BLW	NR > BLW	NR > BLW	NR > NRE	NR > NRW	NR > NRW
			NR > BL			

I1	I2	I4	I5
BL > NRW	NR > NRW	BL > NRW	NR > NRW
BL > BLW	BL > BLW		
NR > BLW	NR > BLW		
NR > NRW	NR > NRW		

T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
BL > BLW	BL > BLW	BL > BLW	BL > BLW	BL > BLW	BL > BLW	BL > BLW
BL > NRW	NR > BLW	BL > NRW	BL > NRW	BL > NRW	BL > NRW	BL > NRW
NR > NRW	BL > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW	NR > NRW
NR > BLW	NR > NRW	NR > BLW	NR > BLW	NR > BLW	NR > BLW	NR > BLW

Discussion

In the socially conscious social situation it was hypothesized that disability would be primary and the results would show that White college students would be more outraged that a person in a wheelchair had been a victim of a violent act. This was not the case, out of the seven dependent variables only three had a significant hypothesized result. Out of a possible thirty-five planned one-way comparisons, there were only six significant results. In all of these comparisons, a wheelchair condition score was significantly lower. The respondents felt more hostile, hopeless,

and sympathetic, but they were not more outraged or disgusted. These results were very unexpected especially with a sample of respondents who were almost 70% women. Women are generally more sympathetic toward persons with disabilities (Stovall & Sedlacek, 1984). Race had no significant affect on the respondents scores.

The result may suggest that crime is so prevalent that individuals are disgusted by the crime itself. Or just the opposite, because crime is such a part of our everyday life individuals are numb to it as long as it doesn't effect them (involved-uninvolved had the lowest average of the seven depend variables).

In the competitive social situations, it was shown that disability did negate the negative feeling that the respondents felt when compared to indiviuals without disability. These results were significant on all seven dependent variables. The unexpected result in this social situation was that the Black condition was not significantly higher in any of the hypothesized comparisons. On one dependent variable (complimented-insulted) the nonrace specific condition was significantly higher than the black condition. There were only two possible explanations for this result: the respondents believed that blacks deserved favorable treatment because of affirmative action is such a debated topic that they are aware of it and answered in a manner that was politically correct.

The explanation that the subject may have assumed the nonrace specific was black or a minority doesn't seem plausible because there was not one significantly higher score on any of the dependent variable when they were compared to the disability conditions.

The result of the intimate social situation did not support the hypothesis that disability has an additive effect or that this set of respondents have negative attitudes toward disabled persons in this situation . On the four dependent variable where there were significant differences not one

disability condition had a higher significant score. Just the opposite occurred the disability conditions were always had significantly lower scores and these were the only comparison that were significant. These results may contributed to the large number of women in the study. Women are more positive toward indiviuals with disabilities (Stovall & Sedlacek, 1984). Race did not have any effect on the responses. There was not significant different score based on race.

The threatening social situation had the most significant hypothesized comparisons. Twenty-eight of the thirty-five planned comparisons were significant. Disability did negate the frightening attitudes held by the respondents. But the negating effect had nothing to do with race. The planned comparison based on race were the only planned comparison not found to be significant. With this set of respondents, disability negated the negative attitudes that are present against men in threatening social situations. This result was to be expected with 70% of the respondents being women.

There were no significant differences in the nonrace conditions found on the surveys with the Latin square design and those of the surveys with all nonrace specific conditions. These would suggest that the respondents honestly answered the surveys with all the conditions. The internal validity check was not significant at .05 on any of the dependent variables when a MANOVA was performed . This suggested that the respondents were reading the questions and answering honestly.

This study gives some idea of how White college students view African Americans with disabilities. But there is still some question of how disability affects attitudes White students have toward African Americans. None of the previous attitudes toward the disabled or African American were found. This calls one to question the results and calls for more research in this area.

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